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CENTER FOR THE AMERICAN WOMAN AND POLITICS
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fact sheet

WOMEN IN ELECTIVE OFFICE

In 1986, more women are serving in Congress than ever before. Two states have women governors. The number of women in state legislatures is more than three times larger than it was fifteen years ago. But women still hold only a small minority of elective offices; at no level of office do women hold more than 15% of the available positions. The total number of women in elective offices in 1986 is estimated to exceed 18,000.*

U.S. CONGRESS

Women hold 4.7% of the 535 seats in the U.S. Congress in 1986. Two women hold seats in the **U.S. Senate** -- **Paula Hawkins** (R) of Florida and **Nancy Landon Kassebaum** (R) of Kansas.

Twenty-three women serve in the **U.S. House of Representatives.** Twelve are Democrats; eleven are Republicans. They represent fourteen states:

California	**Barbara Boxer (D), Sala Burton (D), Bobbi Fiedler (R)**
Colorado	**Patricia Schroeder (D)**
Connecticut	**Nancy R. Johnson (R), Barbara B. Kennelly (D)**
Illinois	**Cardiss Collins (D), Lynn Martin (R)**
Kansas	**Jan Meyers (R)**
Louisiana	**Corinne (Lindy) Boggs (D), Cathy Long (D)**
Maine	**Olympia Snowe (R)**
Maryland	**Helen Delich Bentley (R), Beverly Byron (D), Marjorie S. Holt (R), Barbara Mikulski (D)**
Nebraska	**Virginia Smith (R)**
Nevada	**Barbara Vucanovich (R)**
New Jersey	**Marge Roukema (R)**
Ohio	**Marcy Kaptur (D), Mary Rose Oakar (D)**
Rhode Island	**Claudine Schneider (R)**
Tennessee	**Marilyn Lloyd (D)**

The first woman to serve in the U.S. Congress was Jeanette Rankin, Republican of Montana, elected in 1917 and once again in 1941.

STATEWIDE ELECTIVE OFFICE

Forty-two women hold top statewide elective positions in 1986.** They hold 14.2% of all such positions.

Two women serve as **governors:** **Martha Layne Collins**, a Kentucky Democrat elected in 1983, and **Madeleine Kunin**, a Vermont Democrat elected in 1984.

Five women serve as **lieutenant governors** in 1986. They are **Nancy Dick** (D-CO), **Martha Griffiths** (D-MI), **Marlene Johnson** (DFL-MN), **Harriett Woods** (D-MO) and **Ruth Meiers** (D-ND).

Arlene Violet (R-RI), elected in 1984, was the first woman elected **attorney general** in any state. **Mary Sue Terry** (D-VA) was elected attorney general of Virginia in 1985.

Eleven women serve as elected **secretaries of state** in Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Iowa, Minnesota, New Mexico, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Dakota, and Wyoming.

Women hold **state treasurer** positions in eleven states: Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Idaho, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Nebraska, Nevada, Ohio, and Texas.

Five states, Alabama, Arkansas, Kentucky, Missouri, and Montana, have women state **auditors.** In Arizona, Kentucky, and Wyoming, women serve as **superintendents of public instruction.** In Arizona, a woman serves as **corporation commissioner.** The **labor commissioner** in Oregon and a **public service commissioner** in Tennessee are women.

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* Offices included in these figures are: U.S. Congress, statewide elective offices, state legislatures, county governing boards, mayoralities, and municipal and township governing boards.

** These numbers do not include women elected to the judiciary or women appointed to state cabinet-level positions.

The Center for the American Woman and Politics maintains the National Information Bank on Women in Public Office (NIB) as part of its information services program. These data are the latest available in each area. Other sources include Martin Gruberg's Women in American Politics (Oshkosh, Wisconsin: Academia Press, 1968); and the National Women's Poltical Caucus.

STATE LEGISLATURES

In 1986, 1,101 (14.8%) of state legislators are women. The number of women serving in state legislatures has more than tripled since 1969, when 301 or 4% of state legislators were women.

The ten states with the highest percentages of women state legislators are:

State	% Women	State	% Women
New Hampshire	33.0	Maine	23.7
Vermont	26.1	Connecticut	21.9
Wyoming	25.6	Arizona	20.0
Colorado	24.0	Florida	20.0
Washington	23.8	Oregon	19.4

COUNTY GOVERNING BOARDS

1,476 women held seats on county governing boards in 1984, making up 8% of the total of 18,379 commissioners across the country.* Between 1975 and 1984, the number of women at the county governing board level more than doubled, rising from 456 or 3% in 1975.

MUNICIPAL OFFICES

In November of 1985, among the 100 largest cities in the U.S., four had women mayors: Houston, TX (**Kathy Whitmire**); Sacramento, CA (**Anne Rudin**); San Francisco, CA (**Dianne Feinstein**); and Toledo, OH (**Donna Owens**).

In 1985, in the states for which data are available, 14,672 women held elective positions at the municipal and township level. The percentage of women holding municipal and township offices more than tripled from 1975 to 1985, rising from 4% to 14%.**

PERCENTAGES OF WOMEN IN ELECTIVE OFFICES

Level of Office	1975	1977	1979	1981	1983	1986
U.S. Congress	4%	3%	3%	3%	4%	5%
Statewide Elective	10%	8%	11%	11%	13%	14%
State Legislatures	8%	9%	10%	12%	13%	15%
County Governing Boards	3%	4%	5%	6%	8%	8% (1984)*
Mayors & Municipal/Township Governing Boards	4%	8%	10%	10%	NA***	14% (1985)**

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* Data for 1986 are not yet available.

** States for which data are not available include: IL, IN, KY, MO, PA, WI.

*** CAWP updates municipal figures only every four years.

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